

Connecting Reading and Writing in the Classroom

By

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A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Cheryl K. Bove". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline.

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Abstract

Current research demonstrates the success of teaching the process of writing instead of emphasizing the product of writing. Process writing allows students to make mistakes, learn to recognize their mistakes, and use various resources in their environment to help them correct their mistakes. Teachers focus on the content of their students' writing rather than the mechanics of writing knowing that attention to the craft of writing will produce better writers. I support the importance of process writing and explain how quality children's literature can be used to help children develop writing skills as they are immersed in process writing. I illustrate the importance of using quality children's literature as a model for children to follow and with which the children can experiment using various new writing techniques.

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Connecting Reading and Writing in the Classroom

Every teacher has his or her own styles and procedures for teaching writing. Good educators teach how to create quality writing products that communicate to the intended reader. Exceptional teachers utilize best practice methods of teaching the process of writing and encouraging students to be creative and discover techniques independently while enhancing learning, understanding, and developing skills. Current research reported by classroom teachers, university professors, and organizations such as the National Council of Teachers of English from the 1980s until spring 2004 has shifted from focusing on the product of writing to the process of writing. This brings some questions to the surface. What exactly is the writing process? Why is it significant? Why is it important to use quality literature to enhance this process? Understanding the answers to these questions is an integral aspect to the success of the writing program within the classroom.

According to theory, “‘Process writing is learning how to write by writing....’ This current emphasis in writing instruction focuses on the *process* of creating writing rather than the end product” (as qtd. in *Process Writing*, NCREL). Clare Furneaux states, “Process writing represents a shift in emphasis in teaching writing from the product of writing activities (the finished text) to ways in which text can be developed: from concern with questions such as ‘what have you written?’ [and] ‘what grade is it worth?’ to ‘how will you write it?’ [and] ‘how can it be improved?’” (*Process Writing*, Furneaux). Writing is a very involved process. Most good authors follow steps to create a piece of writing. Their writing changes over time, and different writing is used for different purposes. There are particular steps to follow in order for the writing process to be thorough and organized. “The steps of this process are prewriting, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing...” (Ray, *Wondrous Words* 26). These steps do not necessarily

have to be separate but can overlap and intertwine. For example, some revisions can occur in the drafting process. Furneaux concurs with the purpose of the individual steps and the necessity of multiple drafts to “create meaningful, purposeful writing tasks that develop the writer’s skills” (Process Writing, Furneaux). Also, individual students may choose to take different approaches to tackle the writing process. Ideas that originate from children’s literature are important, and each of the students may extract different ideas from the literature. Some students may take longer in the prewriting stage, while others may produce several drafts before presenting a final product (Carrell and Monroe 148). This process can be incorporated into every other aspect of the teaching day. In “Learning to Write: Honoring Both Process and Product,” Jane Portalupi says that “care given to process serves the goal of developing writers who can create better products” (29).

Students should not write as a result of obligation. They should compose as a result of inspiration. Thomas Newkirk writes, “To strip the writing act of these systems – by prohibiting drawing, assigning uninteresting topics, isolating a child in a tutoring situation without peers, devaluing references to popular culture, or prohibiting “violence” – is to remove the possible appeal of writing itself” (297). Their inspiration comes from a variety of sources. Their personal lives obviously have great influence. Teachers have a powerful influence as well, and they should use that influence to expose their students to quality writing from children’s literature. In her book, Jane Hansen states, “We don’t think of the writing period as a daily block of time. Rather, it’s a block of school and continues from day to day” (6). Writing is an ever-changing life-long process. The inspiration for a child to write comes from a variety of areas that encompass the student’s life. One of the most influential sources of inspiration is in children’s literature. Holbrook Jackson says, “Writers generally enjoy reading, just as readers feel they

might have been writers” (Harwayne 126). Therefore, it becomes necessary that teachers model, instruct, and encourage their students to read like writers and write like readers. “Through literature, children can experience the joys of being alive, find understanding and compassion for those who suffer, co-create with artists and authors using language and visual images, and transform joy into celebration and suffering into justice. In other words, children can learn about being human” (Hade 140). A great book or story has the potential to become an intense motivation for the students that could provoke students to write.

In order for students to take ownership of language, they must be continuously and relentlessly exposed to it. This exposure must come from every aspect of the students’ lives, including both home and school environments. The cooperation of school and home reinforces the importance of writing and allows students to internalize the value of their experiences. Hansen also says, “The more children listen, talk, write, and read good books, the more they may enjoy the music of language” (24). In order to use it to the greatest capacity, children must practice language skills through everyday experiences and authentic projects. Worksheets do not accomplish this goal. Assigned topics on which to write and/or research also do not accomplish this goal. Students should be given the opportunity to explore different types of writing and literature in order to better equip them to be fluent in different types of writing.

In the book Lasting Impressions: Weaving Literature into the Writing Workshop, Shelly Harwayne explains, “If literature is to make a lasting impression on young students’ writing – and on their lives – we need to keep surrounding them with the finest, and we need to keep teaching on the frontiers of our thinking” (338). Although, the type of literature the students should be exposed to should be quality literature more often than popular culture literature, popular culture literature can have value depending on the purpose and the use of it. Too often

popular culture literature has fallen victim of large corporations and has sacrificed quality for monetary value. “More specifically, for the book publishing industry, this has meant that emphasis has increasingly been placed on books that will sell, rather than books that contain ideas that are worth broad dissemination” (Hade 136). However, popular culture literature often lacks the depth needed to articulate processes and skills. Teachers have a great impact on the types of literature the students read. They value the teacher’s opinion and expertise. It is important that students should not rely on teachers to evaluate literature for them. Students need to be taught to critically evaluate books on their own and be encouraged to become independent thinkers. As Harwayne writes, “These literature searches should not be thought of as extras but as ways to enrich the ongoing reading and writing work in that community” (101).

An aspect of best-practice instruction in writing is conferencing. Conferencing allows the teacher to monitor student progress and offer specific help with a current project. Harwayne lists twelve reasons why it is beneficial to refer to quality literature in writing conferences with students. They are the following:

- To spark ideas for their own writing.
- To generate more thought on a particular topic.
- To gather specific bits of information.
- To study traditions of genre.
- To learn from a particular writer.
- To imitate in order to get out of a rut.
- To study shape or design options.
- To gather advice from professional writers.
- To learn editing skills.

- To appreciate publishing options.
- To be challenged.
- To be inspired. (241, 243)

Therefore, since literature can be so influential, it is necessary to ensure that students are being exposed to copious amounts of quality literature to promote and reproduce exceptional writing skills. Students can see how award winning professional writers use the craft to communicate to an audience. So what exactly is craft? Portalupi illustrates it best by saying, “Craft is like a map that helps you as you move through writing and reading. It helps you understand the lay of the land and steer with more authority” (32). She goes on to say, “When we ask students to notice when a text confuses, surprises, or delights them and to reread the text to see what occurs on the page to evoke such a response, we help them study craft” (33). Using this type of literature for these purposes in writing conferences allows teachers to elaborate on specific skills that each individual student needs to improve his or her writing. It provides a concrete example of how it is used in context.

However, in order for students to be able to recognize the craft of writing within the books, they must first be able to experience the literature. They must step into the story world in order to explore the craft. “Students who’ve learned to be touched by passages from literature seem to find it easier to be moved by the entries in their own notebooks” (Harwayne 147). Students must be open to different kinds of literature produced by professionals, classmates, and themselves. To accomplish this, the teacher must expose them to these diverse forms of literature. They must learn to take what they have been exposed to and internalize it. “What you see or hear gets into the brain somehow, and what comes out is not imitation but tempered prose” (Harwayne 159). The students learn to recognize aspects of the craft and things that they find

intriguing or interesting and use it by inserting their own style and voice. “Being a writer involves taking a stance towards experience, towards reading, towards writing. ... [I]t is in a writers *stance* towards experience that written language, both writing and reading, moves from being just a ‘skill’ to being a way of acting in the world” (Brooke 38). This task takes time. Students are most likely not going to be able to perform this skill perfectly over night. However, “Once students have crawled inside these treasured texts in a variety of ways, the process of naming and imitating what they’ve seen or heard will be a good deal easier” (Harwayne 176).

Motivation is also extremely important in the students’ ability to engage in the process of writing. Quality children’s literature can play an integral role in the students’ motivation. “Literature can even strengthen a student’s commitment to this kind of writing” (Harwayne 128). Linda B. Gambrell, Lesley Mandel Morrow, and Christina Pennington concur, “Literacy acquisition occurs in a book-rich context where there is an abundance of purposeful communication and meaning is socially constructed” (“Early Childhood and Elementary Literature-based Instruction: Current Perspectives”). Purposeful and meaningful literacy instruction requires high quality literature that has depth in content and structure. These researchers report that interaction with quality literature results in students’ positive achievements (“Early Childhood and Elementary Literature-based Instruction: Current Perspectives”). In her article concerning children’s literature, Pauline Davey Zeece agrees with the significance of using quality children’s literature in educational instruction. Quality children’s literature provides a model, expands concepts, develops the students’ ability to categorize and classify, “provokes inquiry into the deeper meanings,” provides learning opportunities, enhances understanding, and helps the students organize their thoughts through improving their cognitive skills (Zeece 36-38). A difficult thing for some teachers to recognize is

that children have their own purposes for writing. Writing is a process. Literature can serve as a catalyst for this process. It is important that teachers introduce the literature as a model for students to reference, but it may take some time before students are able to comprehend the value of it. Every author has his or her own purposes for writing, and the student's purpose may not be clear to the teacher. It is important that "we honor children's purposes because this underlies the worth of their choices" (Hansen 34). Without choices, students will lose interest because they lose ownership. Without choices, it will be more difficult for them to become critical independent thinkers willing to explore new experiences. They will be more likely to conform to the stereotypes of society instead of developing critical questions about the rationality of those stereotypes, and their writing will reflect this. Limiting choices stifles creativity and motivation and that decreases the quality of the process and the product, making the reading of the students' writing boring for the teacher. Students are young individuals with voices that must be heard, and this can be efficiently modeled through quality children's literature.

What about mechanics? As Hansen states, "...mechanics do not bring a flat piece of writing to life" (12). There is much more to writing than mechanics. There are some pieces of literature that have no punctuation, and yet the story is still communicated effectively. Most of the time, however, mechanics do have an important role in literature and in student's writing. "The focus on writing/reading itself was not as strong as the focus on understanding and thinking about interactions between people" (Brooke 29). Hansen encourages teachers to "shift away from an emphasis on mechanics to a primary concern for content because if a piece of writing has no information, help with language or correct spelling and punctuation will not make it a best-seller" (145). The purpose of writing is to communicate in some way to the reader. Focusing on mechanics takes attention from the meaning and the process of creating meaning. Mechanics

is “a tool they must acquire” through practice, experiments, and experience (Hansen 103). It is best practice to teach mechanics from the child’s original piece writing rather than from worksheets, and at first, it should only be used to enhance the understanding of the text. “Listening to what children say sets the stage for us to understand their writing and reading” (Hansen 7). Making anecdotal notes and observations about the students’ progress and ability to utilize the steps in the writing process helps teachers know what skills to focus on and when to address them. If the content of the student’s writing makes no sense, teaching the child where to put commas is not beneficial to helping the student become a better writer. In discussing her students’ papers, Jodi Nickel noticed that “the children were usually willing to make editing changes to their stories, but they were more resistant to changing the content of their stories” (140). Initially, the content of the writing is more important to students because they created it. The concept is entirely theirs. Teachers can use examples from quality children’s literature to model different structures for the content of their writing. Nickel noted that, “As the children’s writing increasingly imitate the language of books and became more logical, I knew that the authors were recognizing the needs of their audience” (144). As teachers who monitor students within the classroom, it is “because we spend time with them when they write and read, we know what phonetic generalizations to teach,” what skills to address next, and what types of literature will best exemplify the desired skill to be mastered (Hansen 105).

Whether or not students model their writing after a style in children’s literature, it is their writing. The author of the piece of writing is the authority on that piece. When teachers begin to help, they become the authority (Hansen 50). Teachers should carefully guard the kind of help that they give to the students during writing conferences. Obviously, the students will need guidance. Guidance is the key. Teachers should help the students discover skills and patterns on

their own. This allows the students to maintain ownership of their writing and recognize the importance of the revising and editing steps in the writing process. Teachers using best-practice instruction only “give specific assistance in situations when the children can’t move ahead. They all remember to attend to mechanics only when these enhance a meaningful, interesting text” (Hansen 118).

Peers are an important part of the writing process. The students can use each other as resources rather than depending entirely on the teacher for ideas, strategies, and help. Grouping during the writing process is efficient and effective. Three types of groupings include whole-class grouping, small groups, and individuals. Collaboration is both helpful and meaningful in all aspects of the writing process. The students bounce ideas off of one another to generate topics, they peer edit each other’s papers, they offer suggestions for revision, and they celebrate with each other when a piece of work is published. This allows most students to discover and practice new skills. The teacher should be there to help when the students’ knowledge is limited, and they should encourage students to navigate the direction they want to take with their writing on their own (Hansen 4).

A successful writing workshop usually contains the following elements: choices about content, time for writing, teaching, talking, periods of focused study, publication rituals, high expectations and safety, and structured management (Ray, The Writing Workshop 7-14). The students need to make their own choices in order to maintain ownership and motivation. They need time to write in order to practice the process and develop the craft. The students do need some instruction to help them understand how the craft works. The steps of the process should be clear and posted so the students are reminded continually and minimize procedural questions. Teachers should set high expectations not only for the class as a whole, but also for each

individual child. They should also structure the writing environment in a way that it encourages the students to meet those expectations. Also, it is important to show students their growth from beginning to end (Hansen 97). They need to be aware of where they have been not only to encourage them in their achievements, but also to help them see where they need to go.

Good writing always reflects reading literature in some way. Hansen writes, “Students read good literature and, in turn, write it” (154). Exposing children to quality literature helps reinforce quality writing. When children search for quality books to read independently they are more likely to find a book that they like. They become critical readers and read against the grain. What does it mean to read literature critically? According to Jonda C. McNair, “I define a sociopolitical critique as ‘reading against a text’ in order to uncover its hidden political and social assumptions” (qtd. in McNair 47). Students look more deeply into the text and investigate what the text is really saying. Also, they analyze what makes the literature good, interesting, and enjoyable, and then are more able to reproduce those qualities in their own writing (Hansen 99). Students often reread books that teachers have read aloud. This should be encouraged, because rereading is important. Rereading helps students catch important elements that they might have missed the first time through. It also reinforces proof-reading and revising.

It is extremely important for students to read a diverse variety of literature. Hansen notes, “They read literature not only because they like it, but because they could listen to how other writers put words together” (23). Authors write for different purposes and for different audiences, and different authors use different styles of writing. Students should compare and contrast these differences and examine how they can be used in their own writing for their own purposes. In order to practice critically examining these texts, they must respond to the literature not only in discussion groups but also in their writing. “We’ve not only come to appreciate that

responding to literature can help students find their own topics for writing, we've come to value literature as a major resource for generating topics" (Harwayne 61). Since quality literature is so important in the process writing, teachers should always evaluate the needs of the students in order to provide meaningful texts that will help support the students' purposes and help the students succeed. "What we need to help them write well are texts that have writing in them that matches *the kinds of meanings* our students are trying to convey" (Ray, Wondrous Words 38). Also, if teachers want their students' writing to be quality writing, they should provide quality literature. "Texts that are rich, exciting, and full of flavor are more often those with layers of meaning and those that will more likely lead to a rich variety of personal responses" (Harwayne 62).). Students must have some kind of a response to literature in order to establish uses for it. In the article "Testing the Language Arts," Earle G. Eley writes that individuals bring their own experiences with them and will react to literature in diverse ways. Students may not see the literature in a conventional way, but they should learn how to effectively express what they see (Eley 311). Students should be able to read literature, acknowledge their prior experiences, and apply those assets to their writing based on their own opinions and voices.

In addition to encouraging their students to use quality children's literature as a source of ideas, teachers can also show students that this literature can be used as a reference for writing style. The authors of the professional journal article "Talking about Books: Exploring Critical Literacy: You Can Hear a Pin Drop" are of the opinion that "as literate beings, it behooves us not only to know how to decode and make meaning but also to understand how language works and to what ends, so that we can better see ourselves in light of the kind of world we wish to create and the kind of people we wish to become" (Leland 71). Students, as active readers and writers, have the marvelous opportunity to shape the world in which they live. In her book, Wondrous

Words, Katie Wood Ray explains the importance of using quality children's literature as a model:

Many of us who teach writing have learned to let authors like these help us show our students how to write well. Reading – writing connections have gone beyond writing responses into actual craft apprenticeships in the writing workshop. Rather than garnering ideas for what to write about from their reading, students are learning to take their own important topics and then look to texts to learn *how* to write well about these topics.

Writing well involves learning to attend to the craft of writing, learning to do the sophisticated work of separating *what it's about* from *how it is written*. (3)

Reading and writing are both more effective when taught together. According to James R. Squire, “Almost certainly the current movement will result in more balanced stress on literature, writing, and oral language, and less emphasis on separate instruction in language skills, spelling or grammar” (11). Integration is a key to success. By reading as writers and writing as readers, the students are better able to examine how both skills function together. Hansen claims that “when they are authors, they gain their greatest insights into the reading process, but the writing part of the reading program provides a place for children to think on paper about what they read” (132).

Teachers should encourage students to respond critically to the material that they read and discuss it with their peers. They should encourage them to discuss elements beyond simply the content of the book, although content is important as well. They should guide them into discussions about the structure of the texts. Discussing the author's style might inspire them to mimic it (Harwayne 173). Students should recognize that other authors can provide valuable ideas for writing with which they might try to experiment. Harwayne goes on to note that after

using literature to influence the students' writing style, "their notebook entries were often longer, slower, and filled with sensory detail," which was her goal (52). In order for students to be able to communicate to others in their writing, they need to have experienced emotions and events about which they are writing (Harwayne 13). To help students initiate this type of writing, "they read leads, endings, and well-written parts from books they think the children haven't read, as well as parts from familiar books" (Hansen 29). According to Hansen, when sharing crafts, children notice that their ideas are different from that of their fellow students when they share drafts of their papers. In turn, they sometimes have a different point of view than the author of the book they are reading. All of these circumstances lead them to recognizing multiple voices (71).

Hansen points out that children also need time to listen to the voices of other readers who respond to a book. "As they listen [to their classmates] their personal response to a book becomes richer, a chorus of voices. The children begin in their own minds to consider the options other readers may entertain so that they come to a discussion with the answers to questions they have anticipated" (Hansen 71). Thus she concludes that activities that recognize multiple voices are important in the classroom. While it is important for students to find their voices, it is equally important for teachers to establish a safe classroom environment in which the students feel comfortable developing their voices. Bercaw reinforces this skill by writing, "I continue to learn the delicate balance between respecting and encouraging each student's voice while challenging each to refine and articulate her/his voice, as I do my own" (35). Teachers should model being life-long learners that are constantly seeking ways in which to improve different reading and writing skills.

her/his voice, as I do my own” (35). Teachers should model being life-long learners that are constantly seeking ways in which to improve different reading and writing skills.

Great teachers who have developed their own style of best-practice literacy instruction incorporate all six modes of languages arts into their curriculum. The six modes are reading, writing, speaking, viewing, visually representing, and listening. In addition to these six modes, teachers should strive to encourage their students to become independent, life-long learners. Each child is different. Teachers should expect children to read at different levels and help them evaluate their own difficulty level (Hansen 32). Teachers should model strategies that help students explore literature and think critically about all kinds of literature. “By learning to hold all kinds of literature in their minds long enough to think deeply about them, the students found it easier to hold a moment in the mall, a childhood memory, or a view from their bedroom window long enough in their minds to reflect upon it” (Harwayne 91). Reflection is a key aspect of critical literacy. It involves thinking deeply, questioning, and evaluating and is critical for students endeavoring to become good readers and writers. According to Suzette Abbott and Claudia Grose, “...[T]he children came to understand more deeply the purpose of language, both oral and written, and the way people across cultures use language to organize information, communicate meaning, make sense of the world” (181). When students think about what they are reading and writing, they become aware of numerous uses and purposes for language. Reflection strengthens the students’ ability to synthesize the techniques they learn from other writers and take control of their own writing (Cambourne 133). Reflection leads to internalization and understanding.

The students’ reading should be a time of interaction with the text and with peers. This interaction will better enable the students to transfer skills from one mode of language arts to

another. It also fosters transmediation. According to Dr. Peggy Rice, “Transmediation, in which meanings initiated in one communication system are moved to an alternate communications system (e.g. from reading to writing or peer discussion to drama), provides students with opportunities to reflect consciously on concepts and elaborate on them, forming new connections between existing concepts” (33). This includes many forms of conveying meaning. David O’Brian, a teacher, explored the use of transmediation with “at-risk” students. He notes about one of his students, “He was adept at taking his ideas and feelings and representing them through authoring choices that indicated a keen perspectives on the audience and a genuine, contagious enthusiasm for a popular music and how he could re-represent it through existing media about it” (“At-Risk” Adolescents). This method is an exception to the use of quality children’s literature. Teachers’ goals are to encourage meaningful interactions with literature. Students who are not yet capable of thinking critically about quality literature may benefit more from popular culture experiences with literacy. In these cases, teachers must instruct the students according to their individual needs and motivational levels and build the skills necessary to look critically at literature in the future. Transmediation helps to enrich all children’s literacy. If they struggle in one activity, they should have the opportunity to explore the skill using another method. O’Brien reports, “Their projects showed that they still struggled with print, but that they overcame some of the struggles when print served as one media text among many” (“At-Risk” Adolescents). In order for students to be able to apply skills they have learned in one semiotic system to another semiotic system, they must have internalized the skill. The action of successful transmediation demonstrates learning (Cambourne 126). Harwayne states, “If students’ talk about books is to make a lasting impression, students needed to interact with the information they are receiving and bring it to their own writing” (193). They must reflect upon it. They must develop their own

opinions and ideas. Reading time is not focused on getting the teacher's idea of the intended message. It is what the students perceive the intended message is (Hansen 120). Reflecting upon the literature helps students recognize details within the literature that could be useful in developing their own writing. "When we read something that sounds questionable, we ask about it, as we do with other kinds of writing" (Hansen 131). This skill is sometimes difficult for students to master, and it is therefore important for teacher to continually model it in children's literature as well as their own writing. Of course, one of the goals teachers have for students responding to literature is to use it as a strategy for discovering more writing topics (Harwayne 75).

By examining quality children's literature, students are able to internalize the craft of writing. Ray writes, "An important 'skill' in learning to see and understand the craft of writing in texts is the ability to think about other ways the text might have been written, to think through the other options a writer had for how to write the text" (Wondrous Words 42). They reflect upon and interact with the literature. They need time to think about, absorb, and decode what they have read. Harwayne notes that "Students who've learned to probe the significance of what they read seem more comfortable finding the significance in the words they've written" (147). Being critical readers, they become confident as writers.

Responding to literature is extremely important to the English language arts curriculum. Observing student responses to literature helps teachers understand and evaluate the progress and connections the students are making. Harwayne says, "Not only do I value diverse responses that are so deeply felt and personal, they help students find their own voices" (63). Responding to literature helps them develop as independent learners and eventually helps them become productive, active, contributing members of society. Students need to realize that they have

choices. “Moreover, some realized a freedom in thinking for themselves and making decisions according to their own intellect as opposed to the mandates and directives from others” (Bercaw 32). By becoming independent readers and writers, they establish confidence in their abilities which can transfer to aspects of their lives beyond the classroom.

Two modes of language arts are speaking and listening. Therefore, students should be given the opportunity to share their excitement in both reading and writing (Hansen 20-21). They benefit from discussion about reading and writing through a variety of heterogeneous grouping methods. Also, these discussions are most beneficial if they are directed by the students. However, this “involves trust on the part of the teacher, both that she can teach the children to manage their own interactions and that the content of their discussions will be challenging even without an adult present” (Hansen 126). In order for this skill to properly develop, the teacher must take the time to model his or her expectations and allow time for students to practice it. Children should be required to explain their answers. This will encourage them to think about their thought processes and strategies (Hansen 107). It will also help teachers monitor the productiveness of the learning experiences and discussions. The students should be held accountable for their learning. They must learn to become responsible for the information with which they interact, and they must learn to use it to develop themselves as young individuals. Harwayne claims that “students who become investigators of good writing become colleagues of their teachers, sharing the responsibility of discovering quality literature” (95). Students do not need to depend on their teacher to evaluate literature for them. They should develop the skill of evaluating the literature for themselves, and they should transfer those skills and concepts to their own writing. They should evaluate their own writing using the same standards and criteria as they do for evaluating quality literature.

Once students have interacted with the text searching for ideas to apply to their own writing, they should begin to take notice of the way a piece of quality literature is written. They should examine the craft of writing. It is vital for teachers to recognize the importance of both personal response and attention to craft. Harwayne writes, “They place great value on using literature to inform their students’ writing, but in their eagerness they often begin to explore aspects of the author’s craft before allowing students to respond simply as readers” (189). Students must establish some kind of connection to the literature whether it is positive or negative. Only then can they effectively transfer what they observe from the piece. Carefully examining the text for the use of craft requires awareness and attentiveness. It often requires rereading as well. It involves discovery, discussion, reflection, and application. In Wondrous Words, Katie Wood Ray illustrates “The Five Parts to Reading Like a Writer.” They are the following:

1. *Notice* something about the craft of the text.
2. *Talk* about it and *make a theory* about why a writer might use this craft.
3. Give the craft a *name*.
4. Think of *other texts* you know. Have you seen this craft before?
5. Try and *envision* using this craft in your own writing. (120)

The craft of writing is a particular way the author writes or structures the text or communicates the intended message. There are numerous ways to go about doing this. Students can either mimic an element of the craft that published authors use, or they can develop their own. After all, writing is personal. One method of inspiring the students to explore craft is to compare and contrast literature that they have enjoyed and disliked. They should examine what makes them

ideas with other students, develop their opinions, defend their positions, and articulate their ideas of what good writing really is (Harwayne 39).

Explicit use of craft makes personal writing unique. Craft is part of the writing process because it must be developed and refined in order to communicate a message. Ray claims that “the books that will help your students most as writers are the books that are written with an obvious attention to craft” (Wondrous Words 78). Students of all ages should strive to make their writing better. Exposing them incessantly to quality literature will give them more of an opportunity to immerse themselves in the craft. Ray goes on to say, “When students are taught to see how writing is done, this way of seeing opens up to them huge warehouses of possibilities for how to make their writing better” (Wondrous Words 11). In his article, Brooke concurs “[literature] provided students an opportunity to reflect on personalities and how those personalities were formed, using the characters in the book as examples” (29). According to Harwayne, after the students dive into the literature and critically examine the tools used to make it good writing, they should apply it to their own writing (197). They should use quality children’s literature riddled with craft as a springboard and as a model for their own writing.

Why is it important for teachers to use quality children’s literature as opposed to popular culture literature when teaching their students how to write? One reason is that it follows the International Reading Association/ National Council of Teachers of English (IRA/NCTE) standards. The IRA/NCTE standards are listed in Appendix A. This paper refers to each standard separately by discussing how using quality children’s literature in the writing process meets those standards.

Using quality children’s literature in connection with process writing meets each of the twelve IRA/NCTE standards for the English language arts to some degree. For standard one, in

order to build an understanding of texts, students must examine the texts closely for the use of the English language. To succeed in society, it is imperative that people can read and write. Quality literature exposes students to different kinds of information and different ways to present that information. Through practice, students are able to apply those skills to life in society as well as in their individual lives.

To meet standard two, students should read a wide variety of literature for personal enjoyment, motivation, and education. Hansen says, “Students develop their responses to literature and it changes over time” (133-134). In order to develop their skills, they should read and write for different purposes. While popular culture literature may serve a purpose, there is a significant lack of depth, and there are few dimensions in this type of literature. It can, however, serve as a motivation or a springboard for students to begin reading. But merely “focusing solely on students’ pleasures while ignoring opportunities to teach them to be critical readers is tantamount to undermining their capacity for learning to respect differences” (Alvermann 148).

For standard three, the children explore and apply the craft of writing by probing works they have previously read or are currently reading. By utilizing the skills learned from award winning authors in the process of creating their product, the students will create a rich, intriguing, unique product. They demonstrate their knowledge of the craft by using it.

In order to address standard four, students must practice the process of writing incorporating skills they have learned from reading and discussing quality literature. They must articulate their own voices and let their writing speak to their readers. They must utilize a variety of aspects of the craft in order to develop their writing skills so that they may one day be an award winning author.

For standard five, students must be familiar with the writing process in order to give them much needed structure. They are not limited in their writing because each student may be writing on a different topic, but they must still follow the established essential guidelines for the classroom to remain an efficient and effective writing environment. They should model their writing after quality authors that might write across genres, for different audiences, and for different purposes.

Standard six reflects the craft of writing as well. This aspect includes the fine tuning of the final drafts. Students should be concerned about conventions only when the content of their work is clear and understood. Conventions ensure smoothness and lack of confusion. They should be able to critically look at their writing as well as the writing of their peers in order to help each other improve and become skilled readers and writers.

To meet standard seven, students can conduct research using quality informational books in addition to traditional researching texts and tools. Many of this literature is easier for the students to understand and is more interesting for them to read. They might also incorporate that author's style into the peer discussions or even into the research product.

For standard eight, students can gather information over the computer, and they can even search for award winning books and authors. They can search for information about the authors as well. They can communicate their knowledge through writing, even writing on a computer.

Meeting standard nine, quality children's literature will address a variety of diverse issues. It is up to the teacher to make the students aware of the possibilities for discussions and writing ideas. Students will most definitely have opinions and feelings about some issues, especially those that could potentially be controversial. Writing about those opinions could generate ideas that they might want to pursue further in the process. In addition, Cynthia Brock

explains that “Gee argues that learning a language requires much more than merely learning the form, or grammar, of the language; rather, learning a language involves understanding and engaging effectively in the cultural practices in which that language is embedded” (469).

For standard ten, English language learners can use bilingual literature to help them learn the new language. They can practice writing new words in English as well as their native language. There are quality children’s picture books that can help the English language learners develop their skills in reading by associating pictures with words. They can use those words in their writing and begin to apply it in this manner.

To meet standard eleven, students should critically think about what they are reading and how it relates to their writing. If they are not reading quality books, maybe their writing is not quite quality writing either. They should continuously reflect upon what they are reading and writing. They should be held accountable by their peers, and they should hold their peers accountable. They should help each other become critical, independent, quality readers and writers over time. Hansen says, “We want them to rely on each other and on themselves. We want them to develop self-discipline” (55).

For standard twelve, students apply what they have learned from other writers to their everyday lives and to their writing. They use their reading and writing to accomplish learning, enjoyment, persuasion, and exchange of information skills. They learn and they apply.

Therefore, using quality children’s literature in the writing process accomplishes the goals of all of the IRA/NCTE standards to some degree. Obviously, some are more thoroughly covered than others, but they can still be applied. State standards vary from state to state and across grades. However, most of these IRA/NCTE standards are reflected in the state standards.

In addition, the standards are broad enough that they can be applied to all grade levels in some form or another.

Using quality children's literature in the classroom and utilizing process writing procedures in the classroom are both best practice teaching methods. Combining the two and integrating them in subjects throughout the day produces more confident and successful writers. Literature can be used effectively to model writing techniques and inspire ideas. In addition, writing can be revised, edited, and changed anytime throughout the process. If used appropriately in the classroom, quality literature can produce quality writers.

Reflections

And

Artifacts

Introduction

These artifacts are strategies I incorporated into my curriculum during my student teaching semester Fall 2003. They exemplify not only the ease with which quality literature can connect with the writing process, but also the behavioral responses the students have to the integration. The reflections concerning the artifacts explain what the artifact is, how it was used, and how the students responded to the artifact.

Reflection:

These artifacts are four lesson plans from a unit I taught on Jane Yolen's book Sleeping Ugly. Sleeping Ugly is similar to Sleeping Beauty. However, Sleeping Ugly focuses on the inner beauty of characters. The lesson plans demonstrate how to incorporate quality children's literature into writing and how the two can be easily woven together. They were intentionally left open-ended in order to build the skills the students needed based on their responses. The first plan introduces the unit, and each of the consecutive plans builds upon and reinforces the previous plan. I encouraged students to use common resources, such as dictionaries. They understood, for the most part, that they did not have to ask me how to spell a word because they knew where to look for the information. The students were having difficulty writing complete sentences, so I connected a pre-reading activity to a follow-up writing activity. The students wrote initial partial thoughts and then embellished upon them to create complete sentences.

I was also working with the students on paragraph formation. In their writing, they would produce an entire piece written in one paragraph. Some students were strong enough in their content that they were ready to learn how to organize their writing. I showed them one way to use the craft by encouraging them to examine how Jane Yolen wrote her paragraphs. I also encouraged them to follow her example. In whole-class discussions, the students pointed out that Yolen indented each paragraph. They also noticed that everything within one paragraph was related. Each sentence contributed to the main idea of the individual paragraph. In addition, they scanned other literature and recognized that most authors follow the same format.

Another aspect of craft that the students noticed was how the author used both fantasy and reality. Throughout the semester we focused on what is real and what is fantasy in writing. For example, during the second day of the Sleeping Ugly unit, the students pointed out that the

trees, forest, house, and horses were real elements of the story. They noticed that sleeping for one hundred years, kissing someone to break a spell, and a magic wand are all fantastic elements of the story. They were able to transfer this skill to their own writing, and they began to blend reality and fantasy to create an interesting story and develop rich content. My students often attempted to write pieces with fantastic elements. One student in particular did a very nice job of mixing fantasy with realism. He wrote a series of short stories about a man on earth who was fighting aliens as they invaded the earth. The students analyzed his writing by examining how he used these two elements to make his story interesting. One student even tried to imitate him.

I guided the students to compare and contrast different pieces of literature. They discussed Sidney Rella and Cinderella as well as Sleeping Beauty and Sleeping Ugly. For example, the students noticed that in Sleeping Beauty, the prince kisses the princess and wakes her up from the spell induced by pricking her finger on a spinning wheel. However, in Sleeping Ugly, a poor prince wanders by a cottage and kisses the fairy and Plane Jane. However, he does not kiss the princess. Also, they added that the fairy accidentally put a sleeping spell on everyone instead of the spinning wheel. By exploring the similarities and differences in these stories, the students were able to recognize how to put a personal spin on an old story. Several of the girls wrote stories in which they were the Princesses, and they had to overcome a unique situation in order to marry the Prince.

Through studying characterization, I was able to effectively use transmediation. The students were able to take what they read, think about the important parts, and draw. The students discussed how Yolen used facial expressions, mannerisms, and physical descriptions to illustrate her characters with words. The students demonstrated their understanding of the class discussions by creating an open mind portrait of one of the characters. This learning activity

helps students focus on the attributes of one character. They listed characteristics and events in which the character was involved and drew a picture of that character. They took all of these prewriting techniques and composed a short journal entry. They were also able to revise and edit their journal entries to make sure it made sense to the reader.

In section two of every lesson plan, I have quoted Indiana State Standards for third grade English/Language Arts. These standards are located on the Indiana Department of Education website at <http://www.indianastandards.org/>. Also, included are an example of an open mind portrait and a journal entry and the rubric I used to evaluate their products. The rubric accounts for the content of their products as well as the mechanics since they were required to edit their work and make revisions. The students could obtain five points per category for a total of twenty points. The number of points awarded to the piece depended on the extent to which the piece met the criteria.

Artifacts:
Lesson Plans

Day One: Jane Yolen's Sleeping Ugly

I. Objective(s):

- The students will use a dictionary to find the meaning of unknown words.
- The students will explain the plot of the story *Sleeping Beauty*.

II. Subject Area Standard(s):

Standard 1 READING: Word Recognition, Fluency, and Vocabulary Development

Students understand the basic features of words. They select letter patterns and know how to translate them into spoken language by using phonics (an understanding of the different letters that make different sounds), syllables, word parts (un-, -ful), and context clues (the meaning of the text around a word). They apply this knowledge to achieve fluent (smooth and clear) oral and silent reading.

Indicator:

3.1.7- Use a dictionary to learn the meaning and pronunciation of unknown words.

Standard 3 READING: Literary Response and Analysis

Students read and respond to a wide variety of significant works of children's literature. They identify and discuss the characters, theme (the main idea of a story), plot (what happens in a story), and the setting (where a story takes place) of stories that they read. The selections in the Indiana Reading List illustrate the quality and complexity of the materials to be read by students.

Indicator:

3.3.2-comprehend basic plots of classic fairy tales, myths, folktales, legends, and fables from around the world.

III. Procedure:

Motivation: I will tell the jokes located on pages 70-71 of *Sleeping Ugly*.

Content: I will tell the students, "If you were given a chance to make three wishes, what would you wish for? Take 5 minutes to think about it and list in complete sentences what your wishes would be." I will model with three wishes of my own. After they finish, I will give them the opportunity to share their wishes.

Goal for Learner: Today we are going to read *Sleeping Beauty* and discover the meaning of the vocabulary words in our story.

I will lead the students in a prediction activity. I will write vocabulary words one at a time up on the overhead. I will ask the students what the words mean. For some of the words, I will tell them to use their dictionaries to look up the definitions of the words. After each word, I will ask them to predict what our next story is.

The vocabulary words are as follows:

- Orphan
- Tantrum
- Disguise
- Dreary
- Plague

After we discuss the vocabulary words, I will ask the students if they can tell me something they remember about *Sleeping Beauty*. I will tell them to turn to page 65 in their books. I will read the story of *Sleeping Beauty* to them. After the story, I will tell them that we will be reading another wacky tale. We will be reading the story of *Sleeping Ugly*, which is a wacky tale of *Sleeping Beauty*.

I will take the students on a picture walk through the story.

Extension: I will tell the students to put their sentences of their wishes into a paragraph. They need to have a topic sentence, and they need to make sure they use correct punctuation and spelling.

IV. Evaluation: I will grade the students' wishes sentences. I will give them full credit if they have three wishes written in complete sentences. If we get to the extension, they must also have a paragraph containing a topic sentence and the three wishes. I will use a rubric to grade their paragraphs.

V. Materials Needed:

23 copies of the book *Sleeping Ugly* by Jane Ugly

Blank overhead transparency

3rd grade writing paper transparency

Day Two: Jane Yolen's Sleeping Ugly

I. Objective(s):

- The students will explain the plot of the story *Sleeping Ugly*.
- The students will compare and contrast the events in the two different stories.
- The students will give examples of elements in the story that are real and those that are fantastic.

II. Subject Area Standard(s):

Standard 2 READING: Reading Comprehension

Students read and understand grade-level-appropriate material. They use a variety of comprehension strategies, such as asking and responding to essential questions, making predictions, and comparing information from several sources to understand what is read. The selections in the Indiana Reading List illustrate the quality and complexity of the materials to be read by students. In addition to their regular school reading, at Grade 3, students read a variety of grade-level-appropriate narrative (story) and expository (informational and technical) texts, including classic and contemporary literature, poetry, children's magazines and newspapers, reference materials, and online information.

Indicator:

3.2.4- Recall major points in the text and make and revise predictions about what is read.

Standard 3 READING: Literary Response and Analysis

Students read and respond to a wide variety of significant works of children's literature. They identify and discuss the characters, theme (the main idea of a story), plot (what happens in a story), and the setting (where a story takes place) of stories that they read. The selections in the Indiana Reading List illustrate the quality and complexity of the materials to be read by students.

Indicator:

3.3.2-comprehend basic plots of classic fairy tales, myths, folktales, legends, and fables from around the world.

III. Procedure:

Content:

Goal for Learner: Today we are going to read part of *Sleeping Ugly*. As you read I want you to think about the things that are real and the things that are fantasy. We are going to do the same thing with this story that we did with *The Three Little Hawaiian Pigs*.

I will tell students that we are going to partner read. I will divide the class up into partners. They will get out their pointer fingers to follow along. I direct the students to take out their "My favorite part of the book" bookmark. I will tell them that they are going to read pages 7-29. I will say to them, "As you read, I want you to think about a page that you would like to read aloud to the

class. When you find that page, place the bookmark on that page so you will recognize it when we get to it.”

After the students have read the designated pages, I will tell them to come back to their seats and read over their favorite page several times. When everyone is finished, I will begin reading the story. I explain that we will go page by page, and I will ask if anyone has a bookmark on that page. If they do, they can read that page. If there are several, I will choose one of them to read it.

When we have read through the story again, I will direct the students’ attention to the Real/Fantasy poster. We will pick out what things are real and what things are fantasy in the story.

When we have made a significant list, I will give the students a Venn Diagram page. We will discuss what things are different in the *Sleeping Ugly* and *Sleeping Beauty* and what things are the same.

Extension: I will read a few more pages of the story.

IV. Evaluation: I will grade their Venn Diagram sheets. They must have everything that we discussed in class on their sheets to receive full credit.

V. Materials Needed:

23 copies of the book *Sleeping Ugly* by Jane Ugly

Fantasy/Realism chart

Venn Diagram Chart

23 copies of the Venn Diagram charts

The students’ “My favorite part of the story” bookmarks from their reading bags

____/12 points	1	2	3	4
Content:	The student turns in the assignment and has attempted it.	The student has one original wish. May be off topic.	The student has 2 original wishes. May be off topic.	The student has three original wishes. Stays on the topic.
Topic sentence:	May not have a topic sentence.	The student has a topic sentence, but it is not clear and does not introduce the paragraph.	The student has a topic sentence. It may be unclear.	The student has a clear topic sentences that introduces the paragraph.
Grammar:	Few complete sentences. Has misspelled words. Has incorrect punctuation.	The student may have incomplete sentences, spelling errors, and punctuation errors.	The student has complete sentences, some spelling errors, and some punctuation errors.	The student has complete sentences, correct spelling, and correct punctuation

comments: _____

____/12 points	1	2	3	4
Content:	The student turns in the assignment and has attempted it.	The student has one original wish. May be off topic.	The student has 2 original wishes. May be off topic.	The student has three original wishes. Stays on the topic.
Topic sentence:	May not have a topic sentence.	The student has a topic sentence, but it is not clear and does not introduce the paragraph.	The student has a topic sentence. It may be unclear.	The student has a clear topic sentences that introduces the paragraph.
Grammar:	Few complete sentences. Has misspelled words. Has incorrect punctuation.	The student may have incomplete sentences, spelling errors, and punctuation errors.	The student has complete sentences, some spelling errors, and some punctuation errors.	The student has complete sentences, correct spelling, and correct punctuation

comments: _____

Day three: Jane Yolen's Sleeping Ugly

I. Objective(s):

- The students will explain the plot of the story *Sleeping Ugly*.
- The students will compare and contrast the events in two different stories.
- The students will give examples of the character's character.

II. Subject Area Standard(s):

Standard 3 READING: Literary Response and Analysis

Students read and respond to a wide variety of significant works of children's literature. They identify and discuss the characters, theme (the main idea of a story), plot (what happens in a story), and the setting (where a story takes place) of stories that they read. The selections in the Indiana Reading List illustrate the quality and complexity of the materials to be read by students.

Indicator:

3.3.2-comprehend basic plots of classic fairy tales, myths, folktales, legends, and fables from around the world.

3.3.3- Determine what characters are like by what they say or do and by how the author or illustrator portrays them.

III. Procedure:

Goal for Learner: We are going to finish reading *Sleeping Ugly*. We are going to discover the characters.

Content: I will tell students to read with the partner they read with yesterday. They will get out their pointer fingers to follow along. I will tell them that they are going to read pages 30-64. I will say to them, "As you read, I want you to think about a page that you would like to read aloud to the class. Remember to put your bookmark on that page so you will know where it is when we get to it."

After the students have read the designated pages, I will tell them to come back to their seats and read over their favorite page several times. We will follow the same procedure as yesterday. When everyone is finished, I will begin reading the story. I explain that we will go page by page, and I will ask if anyone has a bookmark on that page. If they do, they can read that page. If there are several, I will choose one of them to read it.

We will discuss what things are different in the stories of *Sleeping Ugly* and *Sleeping Beauty* and what things are the same.

I will give them the sheet "Who's the Real Beauty?" We will work through and discuss this worksheet together as a class. We will discuss what the characters are like.

I will tell the students that they are going to do an open mind portrait of one of the characters. I will explain that an open mind portrait (OMP) is an activity that describes the characters. I will tell the students to choose a character. After they have chosen a character, they need to list at least three characteristics of that character and at least three events with which the character is involved. When they finish listing on the outside of the person, they can make illustrations. (I will tell them to put their OMPs in the center of their teams. I will collect them and keep them for tomorrow's lesson.)

Extension: We will discuss what makes good character and what beauty really is.

IV. Evaluation: I will grade their "Who's the Real Beauty" sheets. They must have everything that we discussed in class on their sheets to receive full credit.

V. Materials Needed:

- 23 copies of the book *Sleeping Ugly* by Jane Ugly
- 23 copies of "Who's the real beauty" sheet
- Overhead of "Who's the real beauty"
- 23 copies of Open Mind Portraits
- Overhead of Open Mind Portraits
- The students' "My favorite part of the story" bookmarks from their reading bags

Day four: Jane Yolen's Sleeping Ugly

I. Objective(s):

- The students will explain the plot of the story *Sleeping Ugly*.
- The students will write a journal entry demonstrating their knowledge of the character's attributes.
- The students will give examples of the character's character.

II. Subject Area Standard(s):

Standard 3 READING: Literary Response and Analysis

Students read and respond to a wide variety of significant works of children's literature. They identify and discuss the characters, theme (the main idea of a story), plot (what happens in a story), and the setting (where a story takes place) of stories that they read. The selections in the Indiana Reading List illustrate the quality and complexity of the materials to be read by students.

Indicator:

3.3.2-comprehend basic plots of classic fairy tales, myths, folktales, legends, and fables from around the world.

3.3.3- Determine what characters are like by what they say or do and by how the author or illustrator portrays them.

Standard 5 WRITING: Writing Applications (Different Types of Writing and Their Characteristics)

At Grade 3, students continue to write compositions that describe and explain familiar objects, events, and experiences. Students write both informal and formal letters. Student writing demonstrates a command of Standard English and the drafting, research, and organizational strategies outlined in Standard 4-Writing Process. Writing demonstrates an awareness of the audience (intended reader) and purpose for writing.

Indicator:

3.5.1- Write narratives (stories) that:

- Provide a context within which and action takes place
- Include details to develop the plot.

III. Procedure:

Goal for Learner: We are going to step into the story world and think like one of the characters.

Content: I will review the vocabulary with the students. I will say the word and ask the students to give me the definition.

I will tell students to follow along with their pointer fingers as I read the entire story once more.

I will return the students' open mind portraits. I will ask the students who the real beauty is in the story, and why she was beautiful. I will ask each of the students to tell the rest of the class which character they chose and one trait of

that character or event in which that character is involved. They will also explain why they chose this character.

I will tell the students that they are going to pretend to be the character in their open mind portrait. They are going to write a diary entry. They need to use third grade writing paper. They will use the facts they included in their open mind portrait to create the story (journal entry). I will model writing the journal entry. I will remind the students to revise and edit their journal entries because they will be graded on this activity. The students will turn in both the open mind portrait and the journal entry.

Extension: I will ask for students to volunteer to read their stories to the rest of the class.

IV. Evaluation: I will grade their open mind portraits and their journal entries based on the facts and depth of the information they included.

V. Materials Needed:

23 copies of the book *Sleeping Ugly* by Jane Ugly
Overhead of Open Mind Portraits
Overhead of third grade writing paper

I was playing under a tree when this rude princess
 named Missarella picked me up the foot. We found a house
 I told a girl named Peter. None I would grant her wish
 if she left home. But then my wand broke and I
 slept for 100 years. Then I got blessed and I woke
 up. What a story!

Old Bailey Great

1. she congrant
wishes



2. she
old
3. she
please
hate
ma

1. she
go
his
not
foot
2. she
for 16
years
3. she
kissed

Sleeping Ugly Writing Activity Rubric

Name: _____

	1	2	3	4	5
Graphic Organizer	Blank Open Mind Portrait	Open Mind Portrait contains 1 or 2 of the following: 3 characteristics, 3 events, the character's name, and/or illustrations	Open Mind Portrait contains 3-4 of the following: 3 characteristics, 3 events, the character's name, and/or illustrations	Open Mind Portrait contains 5-7 of the following: 3 characteristics, 3 events, the character's name, and/or illustrations	Open Mind Portrait contains three characteristics, three events, the character's name, and illustrations
Content	Turned in a paper, but did not stay on-topic	The paper includes 1-2 pieces of the information from the O.M.P. It may not make sense.	The paper includes 3-4 pieces of information from the O.M.P. It stays on-topic, but includes some unnecessary information.	The paper includes 5-6 pieces of information from the O.M.P. It makes sense and stays on the topic.	Includes all of the information from the O.M.P. (character's name , 3 characteristics, 3 events) <i>character's name</i>
Grammar	Grammar is not correct. There are many mistakes.	There are many errors in the paper. The paper is legible.	There are some grammatical errors. The paper is legible. Most sentences are complete.	All sentences are complete. The ending punctuation is correct. There are few grammatical errors.	All sentences are complete, and they have the correct ending punctuation. There may be a variety of sentence structures.
Spelling	There are numerous misspelled words.	The spelling errors break the flow of the paper.	There are few spelling errors. Word Wall Words are misspelled.	There are a few misspelled words. All Word Wall words are spelled correctly.	There are no misspelled words. (appropriate level for third graders)

Numerical Grade: _____/20

Percentage: _____

Letter Grade: _____

COMMENTS: _____

Sleeping Ugly Writing Activity Rubric

Name: _____

	1	2	3	4	5
Graphic Organizer	Blank Open Mind Portrait	Open Mind Portrait contains 1 or 2 of the following: 3 characteristics, 3 events, the character's name, and/or illustrations	Open Mind Portrait contains 3-4 of the following: 3 characteristics, 3 events, the character's name, and/or illustrations	Open Mind Portrait contains 5-7 of the following: 3 characteristics, 3 events, the character's name, and/or illustrations	Open Mind Portrait contains three characteristics, three events, the character's name, and illustrations ✓
Content	Turned in a paper, but did not stay on-topic	The paper includes 1-2 pieces of the information from the O.M.P. It may not make sense.	The paper includes 3-4 pieces of information from the O.M.P. It stays on-topic, but includes some unnecessary information.	The paper includes 5-6 pieces of information from the O.M.P. It makes sense and stays on the topic.	Includes all of the information from the O.M.P. (character's name, 3 characteristics, 3 events) <i>creative</i> ✓
Grammar	Grammar is not correct. There are many mistakes.	There are many errors in the paper. The paper is legible.	There are some grammatical errors. The paper is legible. Most sentences are complete.	All sentences are complete. The ending punctuation is correct. There are few grammatical errors.	All sentences are complete, and they have the correct ending punctuation. There may be a variety of sentence structures. ✓
Spelling	There are numerous misspelled words.	The spelling errors break the flow of the paper.	There are few spelling errors. Word Wall Words are misspelled.	There are a few misspelled words. All Word Wall words are spelled correctly.	There are no misspelled words. (appropriate level for third graders) ✓

Numerical Grade: 20 /20

Percentage: 100%

Letter Grade: A

COMMENTS: Very creative You did a
wonderful job on this assignment.

Reflection:

This artifact is a lesson plan for a writing activity I used to supplement the book Sidney Rella by Bernice Myers. Sidney Rella is similar to the story of Cinderella. Young Sidney gets a pair of special sneakers from his fairy godfather and becomes the star of his brothers' football team. As with Sleeping Ugly, the students had been comparing and contrasting stories. For this activity, the students had to apply the skills they had learned of comparing and contrasting, and they had to expand upon the text using their imaginations and writing skills. They used the same steps of the writing process that they used during the writing block. These steps are prewriting, drafting, editing, revising, and publishing.

These writing activities that I have described are very "teacher-structured." They allow for students to make choices, but they are very limited. However, I used these lesson plans to introduce these types of writing strategies to the students. All students have options in their writing, and this strategy was one of those options. The students could choose to continue using it following these activities or find something else to use. Most of the students attempted alternative writing strategies. However, two of the students chose to continue experimenting with this type of writing. Both of them, for unknown reasons, wrote stories similar to Miss Nelson is Missing. One wrote the short story "Mrs. Rhoten (the classroom teacher) is Missing." The other one wrote "Ms. Mowrey is Missing." Each story was unique. They were both following the general format of the original book, but each story had its own separate plot sequence and events. They used all of the steps of process writing to create their products. I used the same type of activity for Cam Jansen, but I used an interview format instead of a paper. In addition to the lesson plan, I have included samples of directions I used to guide the students' writing for the Sidney Rella writing activities as well as the interview directions in order to show the goals of

the lessons. I have also included the rubric I used to evaluate their products according to both content and structure. The scoring used for this rubric is similar the one used for the Sleeping Ugly rubric except the piece could earn twelve points instead of twenty.

The Cam Jansen activity produced diverse results. The students met in groups to collaborate ideas for questions based on the information they obtained from the story. Most students created questions concerning literal information, but some students thought of a few inferential questions. Some students wrote stories containing interviews in the content of their writing, and other students began to explore how to question texts.

Artifact:

Sidney Rella Lesson Plans

I. **Objective(s):** The students will explain the plot of the story *Sidney Rella*.

- The students will write their own story using the information they have gathered from *Sidney Rella*.
- The students will compare and contrast the stories of *Sidney Rella* and *Cinderella*.

II. **Subject Area Standard(s):**

Standard 3 READING: Literary Response and Analysis

Students read and respond to a wide variety of significant works of children's literature. They identify and discuss the characters, theme (the main idea of a story), plot (what happens in a story), and the setting (where a story takes place) of stories that they read. The selections in the Indiana Reading List illustrate the quality and complexity of the materials to be read by students.

Indicator:

3.3.2-comprehend basic plots of classic fairy tales, myths, folktales, legends, and fables from around the world.

3.3.4- Recall major points in the text and make and revise predictions about what is read.

III. **Procedure:**

Goal for Learner: I am going to read the rest of Sidney Rella and the Glass Sneaker. We are going to compare Sidney Rella to the story of Cinderella. We are also going to do a writing activity: "Sidney Rella and Cinderella" or "The Latest Cinderella Story."

Content: I will read the entire story of Sidney Rella and the Glass Sneaker. I will ask the students comprehension questions about the story as I read.

We will complete the comparison Venn diagram together as a class.

I will allow the children to choose which writing activity they would like to do. The two options are “Sidney Rella and Cinderella” or “The Latest Cinderella Story” from the Teacher’s Resource. I will give them a sheet of directions for each option. They are to use third grade writing paper for their compositions. They need to finish by the end of the Guided Reading time.

Extension: I will ask for students to volunteer to share their writing with the rest of the class.

IV. Evaluation: I will grade their Venn Diagrams, and I will evaluate their stories using a rubric.

V. Materials Needed:

- 23 copies of the book *Sidney Rella and the Glass Slipper* by Bernice Myers
- overhead of the Venn Diagram sheet
- 23 copies of the Venn Diagram sheet
- 23 copies back-to-back of directions for writing

Examples of guidance:

1. Sidney Rella and Cinderella

DIRECTIONS: Write a paper comparing the story of Sidney Rella with the story of Cinderella. Use all the information you have gathered from discussions, reading, and activities.

Be sure to include:

- Who is the main character?
- What happens in the two stories?
- What is different about the stories?
- Which story do you like better?
- Why do you like that story better?
- Remember to title your paper!!!

2. The Latest Cinderella Story

Directions: How would you retell the story of Cinderella? Decide on characters, a setting, and the events that would happen. Write your own story.

Be sure to include:

- **Who would your main character be?**
- **What would he or she wish for?**

- **Would you have a fairy godmother, fairy godfather, or another magical person or animal?**
- **What happens to your character in the story?**
- **Where does your story take place? (What is the setting of your story?)**
- **Don't forget to title your story!!!!**

3. You are a reporter for the school news. Prepare a list of questions with your partner to ask Cam Jansen about the Mystery of the Babe Ruth Baseball. Decide which of you will be Cam Jansen and which of you will be the reporter. Practice asking and answering the questions. You will be presenting your interview to the class.

1. _____

Answer:

Reflection:

Just after Thanksgiving, the Governor of Indiana requested students to send decorated stars reflecting people who inspire others to the Statehouse in Indianapolis. I was doing a literature based theme of Community Ties with my students at the time. I decided that I could use this in connection with both guided reading and writing blocks. The students discussed stories like When Jo Louis Won the Title, Fruit and Vegetable Man, and Family Pictures. They discussed what the word *inspired* means, and they discussed characteristics of people who inspire others from the stories. In small groups, they discussed people in their own lives that demonstrated these same characteristics. They brainstormed ideas of people who could be the subject of their star. Each student wrote a piece about the person who inspired them, and they decorated a star for that person. Most of the students chose to write about one of their parents. One student chose her mother because she thought her mother was the greatest mom in the world, and the student wanted to grow up to be just like her mother. Some students wrote about one of their teachers. A few students wanted to write about the principal, and they asked if they could interview her in order to gain additional information. One student chose to write about an Indiana Pacers player because that player inspired him to practice basketball. The students' responses were generally thoughtful, and they reflected the aspects of good character we had been discussing in class, such as compassion and helpfulness. I have included something that I used to help the children brainstorm ideas.

Artifact:
Brainstorming List

Someone who inspires me is...

Make a list of people who inspire you. Choose one person. Write about why that person is an inspiration to you. Give specific reasons. You may need to do research on this person. This person can be alive, or they may have lived in the past. Be creative!

1. _____

2. _____

Reflection:

This artifact is a learning log written concerning a student that I helped with writing. It describes my interaction with her. The students were working on learning how to write paragraphs. While most of the students were beginning to grasp the concept, one particular student had not demonstrated any paragraph writing skills. I worked with her individually. I used a piece of literature from the self-selected book bin to help her visualize the concept of a paragraph. By looking at the book, the student could identify a paragraph by pointing to one. After we read the paragraph, she was able to acknowledge some of the properties of a paragraph, such as indentation and collections of thoughts connecting one idea. She also informed me that without paragraphs, it was more difficult to understand the writing. While this particular log does not report the outcome, after extensive practice, she began writing paragraphs beautifully and clearly.

Artifact:

Student Teaching Learning Log

Learning Log: week of 9/8/03-9/12/03

I have been helping the students during writing time. Too many students were asking Mrs. Rhoten questions during her writing conferences with other students, so I answered some of their questions. One of the girls, Kennedy, turned in her writing project "All about Me" for approval to publish. She received it back from Mrs. Rhoten with lots of red markings and a note to see me. She came to me with red, puffy, watering eyes.

First of all, she is normally an excellent student. She is an A/B student. It is very evident that she takes learning seriously, and her parents do as well. I do not know if she was upset because she did not do well, because she was embarrassed about not doing well, or because she

was disappointed. However, she was very eager to understand what she had done wrong and how she could improve her paper.

I conferenced her alone for almost the entire writing period one day, and I checked on her frequently the following day. She had written the entire paper in one paragraph and about her father. It was supposed to show at least three paragraphs and be about her.

I took a book from the book basket in the center of her team and asked her to point out where the paragraphs were. I had her compare the paragraphs in the book to her own paragraphs. After studying the two for a little while, she explained the difference and demonstrated that she understood what paragraphs were.

Since her paper strayed from the topic, I had her make a new graphic organizer web. A graphic organizer web begins with a circle containing the topic of the piece in the middle of a piece of paper. There are smaller circles branching off the central circle. These smaller circles contain points that support the main idea. We used the same ideas from her first graphic organizer web, but I instructed her to make it a little more detailed this time to help her stay on the topic. The result was a beautiful paper with nice paragraphs and on the topic of Kennedy.

I feel I was very successful in helping her. I believe it is important to show examples of what the teacher expects of the students. Sometimes a variety of examples are required. Mrs. Rhoten demonstrated the activity by writing her own “All About Me” story. I think it is also important to show examples from literature with which the children are familiar. It is important for the students to make the connection between writing and reading. They need to write as readers and read as writers.

Through research and my own teaching experiences, I feel using quality children’s literature as an example in the writing process is an effective teaching strategy. Quality

children's literature is preferred for instruction because it has depth and merit. This literature provides the best possible example for particular strategies. Quality literature can be integrated easily into every step of the writing process. Those steps are prewriting, drafting, editing, revising, and publishing. In the lessons I taught from Jane Yolen's Sleeping Ugly, I referred back to examples from the book for each step of the writing process both in whole class instruction and based on individual student needs.

Teachers should influence students to become life-long readers and writers. As my research indicates, students should be constantly surrounded by literature and motivated to read and write. Teachers can build their students' skills in these related subjects based on individual needs. Connecting reading and writing in the classroom allows students the opportunity to recognize the similarities and differences between the two skills and to capitalize on their similarities. While teachers should introduce strategies to help students develop both skills, one of these strategies should refer to quality literature as a model.

Quality children's literature can be used as a springboard for ideas. Students can learn how to structure their writing, what kind of information to include in their writing, and how to sequence their writing from their reading. They can also use the same format as a piece of literature to create their own stories, such as pieces the students produced in the "Sidney Rella and Cinderella" or "The Latest Cinderella Story" writing activities. Therefore, connecting reading and writing in the classroom using quality children's literature as a model is an effective strategy when teaching students to write.

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Appendix A

IRA/NCTE English Language Arts Standards

(<http://www.ncte.org/about/over/standards/110846.htm>)

1. Students read a wide range of print and nonprint texts to build an understanding of texts, of themselves, and of the cultures of the United States and the world; to acquire new information; to respond to the needs and demands of society and the workplace; and for personal fulfillment. Among these texts are fiction and nonfiction, classic and contemporary works.
2. Students read a wide range of literature from many periods in many genres to build an understanding of the many dimensions (e.g., philosophical, ethical, aesthetic) of human experience.
3. Students apply a wide range of strategies to comprehend, interpret, evaluate, and appreciate texts. They draw on their prior experience, their interactions with other readers and writers, their knowledge of word meaning and of other texts, their words identification strategies, and their understanding of textual features (e.g., sound-letter correspondence, sentence structure, context, graphics).
4. Students adjust their use of spoken, written, and visual language (e.g., conventions, style, vocabulary) to communicate effectively with a variety of audiences and for different purposes.
5. Students employ a wide range of strategies as they write and use different writing process elements appropriately to communicate with different audiences for a variety of purposes.

6. Students apply knowledge of language structure, language conventions (e.g., spelling and punctuation), media techniques, figurative language, and genre to create, critique, and discuss print and nonprint texts.
7. Students conduct research on issues and interests by generating ideas and questions, and by posing problems. They gather, evaluate, and synthesize data from a variety of sources (e.g., print and nonprint texts, artifacts, people) to communicate their discoveries in ways that suit their purpose and audience.
8. Students use a variety of technological and informational resources (e.g., libraries, databases, computer networks, video) to gather and synthesize information and to create and communicate knowledge.
9. Students develop an understanding of and respect for diversity in language use, patterns, and dialects across cultures, ethnic groups, geographic regions, and social roles.
10. Students whose first language is not English make use of their first language to develop competency in the English language arts and to develop understanding of content across the curriculum.
11. Students participate as knowledgeable, reflective, creative, and critical members of a variety of literacy communities.
12. Students use spoken, written, and visual language to accomplish their own purposes (e.g., for learning, enjoyment, persuasion, and the exchange of information).